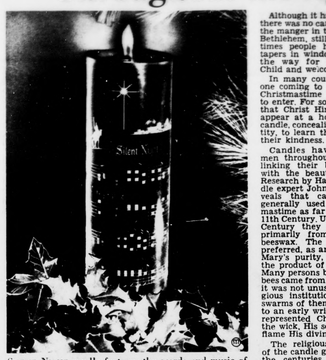
Candles Light the Way Throughout the Ages



SILENT NIGHT candle features the words and music of the famous Christmas carol. Photo from Hallmark

Although it has been said there was no candle to light the manger in the stable at Bethlehem, still from early times people have placed tapers in windows to light the way for the Christ Child and welcome Him.

In many countries, anyone coming to the door at Christmastime was invited to enter. For some believed that Christ Himself would appear at a house with a candle, concealing his identity, to learn the extent of their kindness.

Candles have inspired men throughout the ages, linking their bright glow with the beauty of faith. Research by Hallmark candle expert John Sinjem reveals that candles were generally used at Christmastime as far back as the 11th Century. Until the 18th Century they were made primarily from tallow or beeswax. The latter was preferred, as an emblem of Mary's purity, for wax is the product of virgin bees. Many persons believed that bees came from heaven, and it was not unusual for religious institutions to keep swarms of them. According to an early writer, the wax represented Christ's body; the wick, His soul; and the flame His divine nature.

The religious symbolism of the candle grew through the centuries after early Christians, huddled in the damp chill catacombs of Rome, used lighted candles as a source of comfort.

Total Meat Supplies Down; Beef Output Up

Chicago, Dec. 8,1975--Production of red meats will be down in 1975, despite record supplies of beef, according to David H. Stroud, President of the National Live Stock and Meat Board. He said the decline from 1974 is due to a 17% **drop in pork production.**

He said total red meat production of 36.4 billion pounds (carcass weight) amounts to 180.5 pounds per capita, down from last year's 187.5 pounds. That breaks down into an average (on a carcass weight basis) of 119.6 pounds of beef, 4.1 pounds of veal, 54.8 pounds of pork and 2.0 pounds of lamb available per person in the U.S.

The Meat Board Chief Executive pointed out that the consumption figures were "carcass weight" or "hanging weight." Actual retail sale weight and "on the dinner plate" weight would be much lower. This year's 180.5 pounds carcass weight would amount to only 63.5 pounds cooked, actually-eaten beef, veal, pork and lamb--or less than three ounces a day.

"Beef consumption will be a record high this year," said Stroud. "However, this gain is not enough to offset the sharp decline in per capita pork availability which is at the lowest level in 40 years. While veal consumption has doubled since 1974, the supply is still limited, at less than 5 pounds per capita (carcass weight). Lamb continued its gradual downtrend."

As the meat industry closes the books on 1975, many observers feel next year will see an easing of problems related to weather and feed supplies.

"The feed harvest this year was excellent," Stroud said. "Increased numbers of cattle are being grain-fed and there are indications hogs producers will increase pork production somewhat."

Because of the time required to produce cattle and hogs, the effects of increased production will not be felt in the marketplace for several months according to Stroud. He said more grain-fed cattle will be available after the first of the year, while pork production increases won't be noticed until the latter part of 1976.

He said beef production will likely exceed its 1975 record next year. Total red meat production could increase almost a billion pounds over 1975, but would still be below 1974's output.

"The livestock and meat industry has had some very rough years since 1972. We are not out of the woods yet, but circumstances are improving," said Stroud.

As a rule, Christmas and New Year's Day lead all other holidays in the number of fatalities resulting from traffic accidents. Last year 310 people died as the result of a traffic accident on Christmas day, and 300 on New Year's Day.

"If you take the entire season from mid-December, when the parties begin, to New Year's Day, the figures really add up. In Virginia last year there were 53 traffic fatalities during the last 15 days of 1974. Many more may have died later in January as a result of traffic accidents that occurred during the Christmas season," Lubman said. "Three times as many people have died in traffic accidents since 1913 than all the American soldiers killed in combat during the nation's history. Last year 46,500 people were killed on highways, and that's more than the number of soldiers who were killed in Vietnam," he concluded.

the traffic accidents, and Lubman says that that estimate is conservative. The Crash Research Team puts the figure at 75 percent.

In addition to this, Lubman says Virginia's criteria for determining whether a person is driving under the influence of alcohol should be lowered from a blood alcohol level of .10 to .05. "I've had myself tested, and at .07 per cent, I can't even find my car. Most people are impaired at .05 per cent, and should not drive. At .03 most people begin to be impaired in terms of the thinking function. At the current standard of .10 per cent, the chances of causing an accident are seven times greater than if the driver were sober," said Lubman.

Perhaps because of the influence of alcohol in fatal accidents holidays in general are more dangerous for the driver. While vehicle travel increases by three per cent, the highway death rate increases 14 per cent on a holiday.

"More people are traveling unfamiliar roads during twilight and evening hours, on their way to and from parties. And there are more fatigues drivers during this time of year. A driver can be cold sober, but if he is tired, he is in jeopardy," Lubman said.

"Of course, the biggest factor in fatal traffic accidents, any time of the year, and especially during the prolonged party season from mid-December to New Year's, is alcohol," he continued.

"Before leaving a party, people think that drinking coffee or tomato juice will sober you up. But the only advantage to drinking coffee is that it takes time. And the passage of time is the only thing that sobers you up," Lubman said.

According to the National Safety Council, alcohol plays an influential role in at least half of

Christmas Traffic Fatalities

Richmond-- Christmas is the bloodiest season of the year in terms of traffic fatalities, and one of the reasons, according to a highway safety psychologist at Virginia Commonwealth University, is the very spirit of Christmas itself.

"During the Christmas holidays, many drivers feel a state of euphoria in keeping with the theme of the season,"noted VCU psychologist Melvin V. Lubman, who is also the coordinator of the state's Highway Safety Automobile Crash Research Team which investigates physical, environmental, and psychological causes of fatal traffic accidents in Virginia.

"During the Christmas season, many drivers become more trusting and more relaxed. They don't drive as defensively as they normally would, and they're more ready to believe that a driver will stop at a stop sign. We have a saying on the crash team, "Be paranoid and live longer." If you depend on a stop sign to stop a vehicle, you're playing Russian roulette, said Lubman.

Lubman also contends that Christmas has a reverse psychological impact on some drivers who become extremely depressed.

"On the other end of the continum, there's a strange phenomenon that baffles psychologists...extreme depression during the holidays. An extremely depressed driver is preoccupied with thoughts other than those involved in performing the driving task, thereby significantly increasing his chances of having an accident," Lubman continued.

In addition to these psychological factors, there are other factors influencing fatal accidents during December, according to Lubman, including shorter days.

How to Re-Use Gift Boxes, Cans

Don't be too quick to throw out those good boxes or cartons that hold your family's Christmas gifts—you can make them into handsome containers for everything from hair rollers to sewing materials, not forgetting the canisters and cookie tins you can make out of those plastic-lidded coffee cans!

Cover your boxes and coffee cans with self-adhesive plastic, decorate them with braid or tape, and label them with cut-out letters. It's easy to do with self stick plastic — just make sure surface of box or tin is clean and dry. Then cut your plastic to fit, allowing for an overlap at seams or edges, and press it down smoothly. Or you can use fabric or gift paper, which you'll have to glue on.

It's a great way to "recycle" your boxes and cans — and you'll have attractive containers for all sorts of things, in kitchen, bathroom, or at desk or phone.

You can make a pretty pencil jug out of a juice can and never again have to say, "Wait till I find a pencil," while you're talking on the phone!

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It's Christmas . . . time to renew our faith in the great principles of peace and brotherhood.

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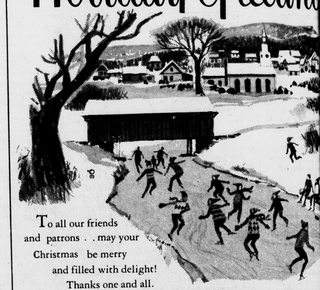
Holiday Greetings



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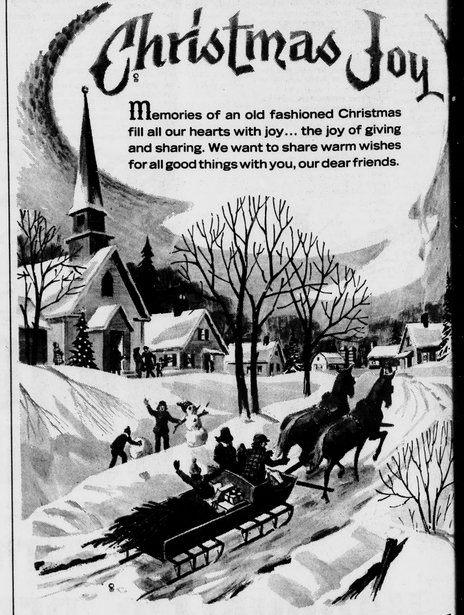

Memories of an old fashioned Christmas fill all our hearts with joy... the joy of giving and sharing. We want to share warm wishes for all good things with you, our dear friends.

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...ritol Comments

By Dan Daniel

...ress, Congress is ...ng of questions ...ed behind ...ng business.

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...ch ed for considera- ...ch December is the ...ch Report on the ...ch and Conserva- ...ch

May this holiday season bestow on you every blessing and happiness. Please accept our best wishes, and may we express our gratitude to you for your loyal patronage. Thank you!

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FOOD SHOPPER

By Susan K. Simpson, Virginia Department of Agriculture & Commerce

Hams and Virginia, in many circles, are synonymous, since they have become known through the years all over the world. Holiday time and ham buying time are often synonymous, too, since Virginia hams are sought after to adorn the holiday table. Whether it be for family or company, there really can't be a better choice.

Today's consumer, though, is faced with such a selection of cured ham products that often it is difficult to make good buying decisions. Types of cures, smoking procedures, length of aging and processing procedures are just a few of the many variables which make a difference in the end ham product.

To help make those ham buying decisions, it is important to know and understand some of the basic definitions and descriptions for Virginia cured ham products.

Consider first the **brine-cured ham.** This one is sometimes called a packer's ham or a packer's dry ham. The latter name can be misleading since the cure itself is in a solution. Generally, though, a brine-cured ham is meat from the hind leg of pork which has been injected with a curing brine solution, treated with a heat process and brought back to original weight. It is the type of ham found at the meat counter labeled "smoked ham" or "ham". These hams may be further labeled "fully cooked" or "cook-before-eating". "Fully cooked" hams can be served cold without further cooking or they may be reheated. "Cook-before-eating" hams require additional cooking.

Not to be confused with the first type discussed is **ham, water-added.** This ham, too, has been injected with a curing brine solution, and treated with a heat process. Instead of being brought back to the original weight, this ham has up to 10 percent added weight due to absorption of the brine solution. Water-added hams may be found labeled "smoked ham, water-added" or simply "ham, water-added". Similarly, an **imitation ham** is a ham with more than 10 percent added weight due to absorption of the brine solution, and will be labeled such.

Now to **country hams,** the product Virginia is most famous for. Country hams are hams that have been produced by using a dry cure, may or may not be smoked, then aged. There are sugar cured country hams, which should be labeled as such. Country hams have long or short hanks. The long-cure is the long shank ham, aged six months or longer, usually a year, and is hung from the rafters to cure in a natural environent. The short-cure is the short shank ham aged approximately three months.

Virginia law states that a ham labeled as **SMITHFIELD HAM** can be produced only in the town limits of Smithfield, Virginia. Genuine Smithfield hams are cured by the long-cure, dry salt method of cure and aged for a minimum period of six months.

To be labeled **hickory-smoked,** a ham must be smoked by hanging over hickory chips in the smokehouse. Hickory wood must be used.

In Virginia, there are regional preferences for curing and flavor of country hams. In Southside Virginia, hams are smoked to give the added flavor. In Southwest Virginia, hams are not usually smoked, but instead are flavored with black pepper, molasses, brown sugar, saltpeter and cayenne pepper. Other sections of the State are just as destinative as far as flavoring agents for country hams are concerned.

To make sure of the type of ham you are buying, why not discuss it with the meat manager of your favorite store. Hams are always a delightful choice, no matter how they come.

Living Proof

Mrs. Ethne Barth, Mt. Kisco, New York, is one of thousands of women who are cured of uterine cancer. One of the most common cancers in women, it is highly curable if detected *in time.*

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A Great Mission

Join our great life-saving mission, says the American Cancer Society to women over 20. Get your Pap test to detect uterine cancer and get a friend or a relative to have one, too.

The Pap test is a painless, simple and quick method of detecting uterine cancer, the American Cancer Society points out. All women over 20 are urged to adopt this lifesaving habit.

It's Precious!

When a woman decides to have a Pap test, the American Cancer Society believes she may be giving herself and her loved ones a most precious gift — her continued health and well being.

Women will agree with the American Cancer Society that they owe it to themselves to have a Pap test each year.

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Calling all women over 20 to have a Pap test! The life you save could be your own, reminds the American Cancer Society.

American Cancer Society

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